BATTLEWORLD

# MASTER OF KUNG FU

BLACKMAN
TALAJIC
SUDZUKA
MRVA

SECRET WARS

004

MARVEL

# SECRET WARS

THE MULTIVERSE WAS DESTROYED!

NOW ALL THAT REMAINS...IS **BATTLEWORLD**: A MASSIVE, PATCHWORK PLANET COMPOSED OF THE FRAGMENTS OF WORLDS THAT NO LONGER EXIST, MAINTAINED BY THE IRON WILL OF ITS GOD AND MASTER, VICTOR VON DOOM!

EACH REGION IS A DOMAIN UNTO ITSELF!

IN K'UN LUN, THE TOURNAMENT OF THE THIRTEEN CHAMBERS IS AT HAND. THE WINNER WILL BE THE NEW EMPEROR OF THE DOMAIN.

SHANG-CHI, DISGRACED SON OF EMPEROR ZHENG ZHU, HAS ENTERED THE TOURNAMENT AFTER FORMING HIS OWN SCHOOL OF OUTCAST STUDENTS.

AFTER A GRUELING GAUNTLET WHEREIN SHANG DEFEATED A HOST OF THE OTHER MASTERS, A BATTERED AND EXHAUSTED SHANG-CHI MUST FACE RED SAI AND DANIEL RAND-K'AI, BOTH OF WHOM HAVE A VERY PERSONAL SCORE TO SETTLE. ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, THE FINAL BATTLE IS AT HAND TO DETERMINE WHO IS THE TRUE...

# MASTER OF KUNG FU

## CHAPTER FOUR: MASTER AND APPRENTICE


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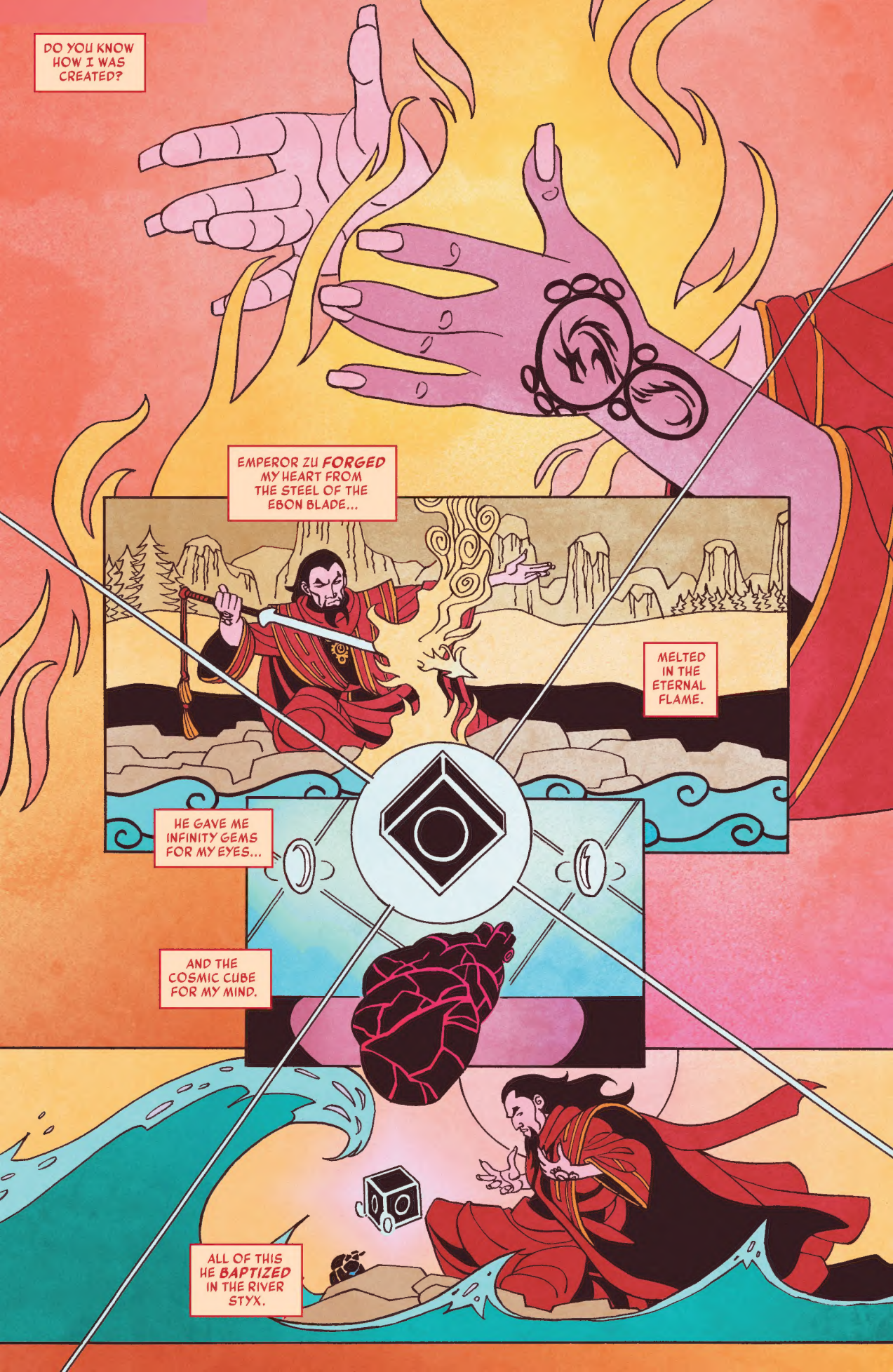
DO YOU KNOW HOW I WAS CREATED?
EMPEROR ZU FORGED MY HEART FROM THE STEEL OF THE EBON BLADE...
MELTED IN THE ETERNAL FLAME.
HE GAVE ME INFINITY GEMS FOR MY EYES...
AND THE COSMIC CUBE FOR MY MIND.
ALL OF THIS HE BAPTIZED IN THE RIVER STYX.

HE BROUGHT ME INTO THE WORLD, STILL-BORN. *DEAD.*

UNTIL MY FATHER FILLED MY LUNGS WITH THE SMOKE OF SMOLDERING PHOENIX ASHES.

BUT MY BIRTH DOESN'T REALLY MATTER, DOES IT? IT'S THE YEARS AFTER THAT COUNT FOR SOMETHING...

LIKE THE ANCIENT HUNTER WHO USES EVERY PART OF THE ANIMAL HE HAS KILLED, ZHENG ZU WASTED NOTHING OF THE WORLD AROUND US.

IT WOULD ALL BE PART OF MY TRAINING.

EVERY TRIP TO THE WATER CLOSET OR THE WELL, A GAUNTLET.

EVERY LONG NIGHT, A TERROR...

EVERY PLAYMATE, AN ASSASSIN...

EVERY GREAT LOVE, A LOSS.

HE TAUGHT ME TO FEAR NOTHING. EXCEPT *FAILURE.*

AND THUS I BECAME SHANG-CHI.

THE RISING SPIRIT.

THE MOST PROMISING STUDENT OF THE MOST POWERFUL SCHOOL K'UN LUN HAS EVER KNOWN.

OR SO MY FATHER WOULD HAVE YOU BELIEVE...
MORE THAN LIKELY, HE JUST CAN'T RECALL WHICH OF HIS MANY CONCUBINES SPAWNED ME.
EMPEROR ZU HAS ALWAYS BEEN A GIFTED LIAR.
AND FAR WORSE. SLAVER, EXECUTIONER, DESPOT.
RED SAI, ONCE MY SOLE FRIEND... AND MORE.
RAND-K'AI, ONCE MY MOST RESPECTED RIVAL...
YOU MUST LET ME PASS. ONLY I CAN DEFEAT MY FATHER.
YOU WILL NEVER SIT ON THE THRONE, MURDERER!
KLASSSH

FIGHT BACK! YOU OWE ME THAT!
NO. THAT IS WHAT MY FATHER WANTS!
FOR US TO BREAK AGAINST ONE ANOTHER BEFORE EITHER OF US CAN FACE HIM.
OR HE JUST WANTS US TO BREAK YOU.
GAH!
SHANG-CHI!
NNNFF...
I'M ALL RIGHT, KITTEN...

FAR FROM IT.
UNGH!
NOW WILL YOU FIGHT?
...I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN...
...SOMETHING IS WRONG...
RED SAI?
YES. POISON ON MY BLADE.

...NO...
THERE IS NO HONOR IN THIS...
CALL IT KARMA. THERE WAS NO HONOR IN MURDERING YOUR MASTER, EITHER.
THEN REDEEM YOURSELF BEFORE YOU DIE. CONFESS.
ADMIT THAT THE EMPEROR SENT YOU TO KILL MY MASTER.
NO...
ZHENG ZU SENT ME.
BUT MASTER TUAN DEFEATED ME AND I FLED.
WHEN EMPEROR ZU LEARNED OF MY FAILURE, HE THREATENED TO KILL ME, SLAUGHTER MY STUDENTS...BURN MY SCHOOL TO THE GROUND...
UNLESS SHANG-CHI DID WHAT YOU COULD NOT.
YES... SHANG-CHI SACRIFICED HIS HONOR FOR ME.
AND THEN ZHENG ZU EXILED HIM, TO COVER THE EMPEROR'S OWN CRIME.
I DIDN'T HAVE MUCH HONOR TO SACRIFICE...
BUT YOU SHOULD HAVE LET THE TRUTH DIE WITH ME...

NO! SHANG-CHI!
RAND-K'AI, YOU HAVE TO SAVE HIM! YOU HEARD HER!
SHANG-CHI ONLY KILLED TUAN TO PROTECT AN ENTIRE SCHOOL!
HE SHOULD HAVE FOUND ANOTHER WAY. HE COULD HAVE KILLED HIS FATHER INSTEAD...
NO. ZHENG ZU IS NOT JUST HIS *FATHER.*
ZHENG ZU WAS ALSO HIS *MASTER...*
A MASTER HE WAS TRAINED TO FOLLOW WITHOUT PAUSE OR QUESTION.
WOULDN'T *YOU* HAVE DONE ANYTHING FOR YOUR MASTER?
I...I DON'T KNOW.

BUT I WOULD DO ANYTHING FOR *K'UN LUN.*

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
AS LORD TUAN TAUGHT ME.
"THE IRON FIST CAN SHATTER THE WALL AND SLICE THROUGH THE DARKNESS..."
"LIFT THE MOUNTAIN AND BOIL THE BLOOD."
YOU'RE BURNING THE POISON OUT OF HIM...
YES.
AAAIGGH!

YOU SAVED ME...
WHY?
BECAUSE I KNOW YOU WERE RIGHT...
ONLY YOU CAN OVERTHROW ZHENG ZU.
RED SAI...IF I CANNOT DEFEAT THE EMPEROR, HE WILL KILL YOU FOR LETTING ME LEAVE THIS CHAMBER.
YES.
WHICH IS WHY YOU WILL NOT FAIL.
FOR YOUR HEAD.

KEEP THE IRON FIST ALIVE. I'M SURE HE WILL WANT TO SETTLE OUR DEBT LATER...
JUST GO. FREE THE KINGDOM AND THE DEBT WILL BE PAID.
STAY CLOSE, KITTEN. I DON'T KNOW WHAT COMES NEXT...
I SEE A LIGHT AHEAD.
THE THIRTEENTH CHAMBER...
*THAT* IS THE DOOR TO THE THIRTEENTH CHAMBER?
SO IT APPEARS.
IF I FALL, YOU'LL NEED TO GET THE LOWEST CASTE OUT OF K'UN LUN. THE EMPEROR AND THE TEN RINGS WILL HUNT YOU DOWN, EXECUTE YOU IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE...
YES, MASTER.
HEH. MASTER...

FATHER.

SON.

YOU HAVE NO HOPE FOR VICTORY HERE, SHANG-CHI.

ONLY LORD TUAN HAS EVER CHALLENGED ME IN THIS CHAMBER.

BUT I NEVER NEED FACE HIM AGAIN...

BECAUSE OF YOU.

IF ONLY YOU HAD COMPLETED YOUR MISSION...

HUNTED DOWN AND KILLED THE REST OF THE GREAT MASTERS...

BUT INSTEAD, YOU RAN. FROM THE SCHOOL. FROM ME.

AAIGH!

SO I DECIDED THAT IF YOU WOULD RATHER BE AN EXILE THAN MY SON, ALL OUTCASTS WOULD PAY FOR YOUR BETRAYAL.

BUT YOU CAN BE FORGIVEN NOW. KNEEL BEFORE YOUR EMPEROR. PLEDGE FEALTY TO YOUR FATHER.

NO. I WILL NEVER AGAIN BE YOUR SON.

BUT I AM SHANG-CHI!

FOOL. YOUR EVERY MOVE...

EVERY TACTIC...

EVERY TECHNIQUE...

...I TAUGHT YOU. ALL BUT ONE...

THE SPECTRAL TOUCH.

YOU DIDN'T TEACH ME EVERYTHING I KNOW...

I HAVE LEARNED MUCH MORE FROM MY STUDENTS.

WHAT?!?

HAH. YOU ARE TRULY THE LOWEST CASTE NOW. YOU HOPE TO DEFEAT ME AS A GHOST?

NO. A *SPIRIT.* WITH CONTROL OVER THE TEN RINGS...

THE POWER TO HARDEN MY HANDS INTO THE MORTAL BLADE...

AND USE THE NIGHTBRINGER TO SHAPE WEAPONS FROM THE DARKEST PARTS OF MY SOUL.

I CAN DRAW THE CHILL FROM THE AIR FOR THE ZERO TOUCH...

AND CHANNEL THE HEAT IN MY BLOOD INTO THE FLAME FIST.

YOU SHOWED ME HOW TO TURN MY ENEMY'S NERVE IMPULSES AGAINST HIM WITH THE SHOCKING PALM...

YOU GAVE ME THE SECRET OF THE LONG BREATH AND THE BLINDING GAZE OF THE DAEMON'S EYE...

AAAAUGH!

AND HOW TO FORCE ALL OF MY MOST PAINFUL MEMORIES INTO THE MIND OF ANOTHER...

*LOST HOPE,* YOU CALLED THIS ONE.

AND NEARLY LAST OF ALL, I LEARNED REMAKER'S GIFT, TO TURN MY FLESH HARD AS A DIAMOND.

NNNGH!

I MIGHT *HATE* THE TEN RINGS, BUT THEY MAKE ME WHOLE...

DO YOU YIELD, EMPEROR?

TO YOU? NEVER.

I HAVE MASTERED DEATH! WITH JUST A TOUCH, I DELIVER YOU TO HER.
WHA-- WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
A NEW RING. ONE THAT I ALONE HAVE DISCOVERED.
I CALL IT THE GORGON'S EYE.
YOUR MUSCLES, YOUR BONES...
NOOOOO!!
YOUR FLESH...

IT ALL BECOMES STONE. FOREVER.
GOODBYE, FATHER...
HOW DID YOU LEARN TO DO THAT?
I HAVE A STUDENT WHO IS TRAPPED AS A SPRITE...A SHADOW.
I HAVE BEEN SEARCHING FOR A WAY TO BRING HER BACK.
WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, MASTER, I THINK WE NEED TO KEEP SEARCHING...I'D RATHER BE A GHOST THAN A STATUE.
AS YOU WISH, KITTEN.

AND THAT IS HOW SHANG-CHI BECAME THE NEXT GREAT EMPEROR OF K'UN LUN...
WHEN HE EMERGED, THE ENTIRE KINGDOM WAITED TO EMBRACE HIM.
RAND-K'AI AND RED SAI...ALL THE GREAT MASTERS...
THE LEADERLESS TEN RINGS...
AND THE LOWEST CASTE...
WHAT NOW, EMPEROR?
A DRINK AND A NAP...
"...AND THEN WE TRAIN."
FOR BRUCE!

BLACK MANTA
EMPIRE
FINCH